



**MISSOURI
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Local Government Kitchen Cabinet Meeting Notes
Lewis & Clark State Office Building, June 27, 2013
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

Welcome & Introductions

Director Sara Parker Pauley welcomed the participants, and announced that a meeting of all the kitchen cabinets will be held in September. One individual kitchen cabinet meeting and one combined meeting is planned for future years.

Sara provided an update of legislation passed in the 2013 session, particularly HB 650 and HB 28, the environmental omnibus bills. The Governor has not signed either bill. HB 28 would alter the department's structure by moving the Division of Energy to the Department of Economic Development and the Land Survey Program to the Department of Agriculture. Fees for water, hazardous waste, batteries and industrial mining would be set by their respective commissions, with stakeholder agreement, and with the General Assembly having an opportunity to approve or disapprove the revised fees.

Legislative Update

Jay Atkins explained some other recent legislative actions. HB 28, in addition to the changes Sara described, would consolidate multiple permits for small businesses. The department will change our procedures for beach closures to a public notification rather than a beach closure. An interim committee will be studying Solid Waste Management Districts in response to the introduction of SB 13 this session. Concern was expressed regarding the water fee rule process, stating that the stakeholder group was not yet in agreement, so it may be premature to present the rule to the Clean Water Commission.

Community Services Presentation

Jim Macy, of the department's Financial Assistance Center, described the department's Community Services Initiative. He explained that the department already has established relationships with large communities throughout Missouri, but that smaller communities, who may lack full time staff, have environmental issues and may need assistance from the department. Since many communities view the department as strictly a regulator, we plan to work with partner agencies and organizations that have

established relationships with smaller communities to identify environmental issues in their watershed. Then we can understand where the communities' needs are regarding environmental compliance, and help them develop a plan to address these needs.

A point was made that the phrase "smaller communities" shouldn't exclude the St. Louis and Kansas City areas, as St. Louis alone has an estimated 300 smaller municipalities, all having similar environmental issues to more rural communities. Also, the department should not assume that East-West Gateway and MARC will be able to assume lead roles in this effort, as their staff already have annual work plans in place. A comment was made that smaller communities need assistance with more than just water issues – the department should include air, solid waste, and other issues in their efforts.

Non-governmental organizations also have their plates full, as some smaller communities are letting their city administrators go, relying on the Mayor to run the city. In many of these cases, they are turning to their associations for assistance. Jim Macy noted that now is a good time to provide financial assistance for communities, as loan rates were likely to increase from the current 2.39% clean water rate and 1.89% drinking water rate.

A suggestion was made to see how the Rathman Lake Watershed Alliance in Iowa approached watershed based planning. They subdivided the watershed into micro-watersheds, and focused on the 10 to 15 most important issues in each area.

Energy Loan and Weatherization Programs

Llona Weiss presented information on the Division of Energy's Energy Loan and Weatherization programs. The division makes loans to local governments, schools and non-governmental organizations. These loans are repaid with the resulting energy savings, so there is no debt or bond issue needed. Application deadline for the next such loans is August 31, 2013. Weatherization monies help low-income residents reduce their expenditures for gas and electricity. The department provides Builder / Operator Certification Training for building operation and maintenance staff. Loans are also available for energy efficiency improvements in water and wastewater treatment facilities. In partnership with the Missouri Rural Water Alliance, the department works to train operators in small communities, and is planning five new training locations within the state. Chris Buckland, Missouri State Parks, pointed out that these energy loans can be used as required match for grants to construct or maintain trails or other recreational facilities (such as ballpark lighting, for example) in local communities. The Missouri Public Utilities Association is working with the University of Missouri – Columbia to study how much energy efficiency is possible in water and wastewater plants.

Facilitated Discussion

The remainder of the discussion was facilitated through use of anonymous responses to questions using Turning Point equipment. Questions and attendees' responses are provided below.

Question: Which is the most pressing environmental area for your organization?

Water Quality	80%
Air Quality	7%
Hazardous / Solid Waste Management	13%

During discussion, concern was expressed regarding how communities would address higher expectations and standards in the future. Air quality concerns included coal fired power plants and how Kansas City, Springfield, Joplin and other southwestern Missouri communities would meet an enhanced ozone standard. Landfills were a concern – both how to manage and where to place new landfills.

Question: What is the most pressing environmental issue for the State of Missouri?

Water Quality	81%
Hazardous / Solid Waste Management	6%
Energy	13%

Water quality issues highlighted by attendees were infrastructure needs related to water quality, particularly with many smaller communities unable to meet current standards. Another issue was attracting young people to the water / wastewater industry, and the need to make young people aware of opportunities in this field. The Veterans Administration has a program for water / wastewater operators where the VA pays up to six months of salary and benefits for a veteran, as well as needed equipment. Community colleges and even rural high schools were suggested as places to make young people aware of these careers.

Question: Which is the most important issue for your organization?

Regulations	53%
Pass-through Funding to Communities	27%
Effective Communications	13%
Department Efficiency	7%

The biggest threat to sustainable plans for city services was getting cities to spend monies for perceived “extras” if there are no additional regulatory requirements. It would be helpful if department staff would contact RPC staff ahead of such informational meetings in their region. This way, they could help pre-plan the meeting, as RPC staff are familiar with where knowledge gaps exist. It was noted that both EWGCC and MARC have to deal with regulations from two different states. Sometimes receiving different answers from regional and central office staff was cited as a concern, as well as vague language or undefined terms in new regulation. Improved planning efforts would encourage cities to incorporate environmental concerns just as they do transportation issues. One suggestion was to “follow the \$,” as cities will pay attention to

even small amounts of available funding. MACOG is updating information on their website regarding city and county planning and zoning statistics.

Question: Which part of the regulatory process needs the most improvement?

Permitting	25%
Technical Assistance	25%
Inspections	6%
Enforcement	19%
Other	25%

Attendees desire consistency from one permit to another, and for permits to be relevant to the specific permitted location. Permits need to be reviewed by a second staff member prior to the public comment period, to eliminate typographical errors, math and grammatical errors. Technical assistance was desired to help educate people before enforcement actions are instigated. Consistency and action by DNR during enforcement was suggested, stating that the department should be viewed as “the police.” The example provided was that numerous package treatment plants had been cited for violations over the years, but without positive results. Another example was extensive documentation by the department of two improperly closed landfills in Maryland Heights, without action taken. Those selecting “other” addressed the length of time taken in development of new regulations. Also, the perception that one stakeholder’s view was being chosen by the department, or that discussions were being “hijacked” by one particular view.

Question: Which is the most important criterion in environmental regulations?

Practical Implementation	75%
Environmental protection	13%
Citizens’ Health	13%

Since “cost” was not selected by any attendees, it was explained that those choosing practical implementation considered cost as part of this answer. One attendee asked “What does sustainable look like? – and can we practically achieve this outcome?”

Attendees were asked a series of questions in order to guide the department’s efforts to improve services, answering to what extent would each of the following be beneficial to their organization’s interactions with the agency. Results are shown below.

	Not Very Beneficial	Somewhat Beneficial	Beneficial	Very Beneficial		
Streamlined Permitting		25%	50%	25%		
Clarifying Regulations			50%	50%		
Flexibility in Compliance		38%	16%	13%		

Timelines						
Expedited Permit Schedules – with Higher Fee	75%	13%	13%			
Reduce Cost of Compliance	6%	38%	31%	25%		
Single Departmental Contact	6%	25%	44%	25%		
Collaboration at Local & Regional Level		19%	19%	63%		
Additional Methods / Opportunities for Engagement	7%	27%	40%	27%		

There was a concern that expedited permit schedules might be discriminatory, as smaller or lower income communities would not be able to afford the fee for expedited permits.

Attendees were also asked “To what extent do you feel each of the following program areas meet the needs of your organization in addressing your most pressing environmental issues?” Results are shown in the chart below.

	Excellent	Satisfactory	Somewhat satisfactory	Poor/not satisfactory	No opinion/don't know
Air		27%			60%
Geology		14%	7%		79%
Hazardous Waste		27%	7%		67%
Land Reclamation		20%			80%
Solid Waste		21%	29%		50%
Water Protection	7%	47%	33%	7%	7%
Water Resources		60%			40%
Energy	7%	14%	21%	7%	50%

State Parks		29%		29%	43%
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Attendees were asked “On average, how many DNR meetings do you and/or your staff attend in a year?” They answered more than 10 meetings per year (63%), one to five meetings (31%) and six to ten meetings (6%).

Round Table / Wrap Up

Attendees were asked for their comments - on the meeting, updates from their organization, etc. The department was encouraged to work with local citizens rather than agencies – “let the locals be your guide.” Preference for this meeting format compared to last year was expressed. More positive public engagement is encouraged, rather than bad news like closed beaches all the time. Concern was expressed regarding changes to the solid waste management districts through legislation. Several attendees expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to discuss issues with the department.

Sara thanked all of those attending for their time and thoughtful discussion of the issues. The first joint Kitchen Cabinet meeting will be held on September 20 for members of the Local Government, Agricultural, Business, Community and Environmental Cabinets.